

LISTENING TOUR SUMMARIES

Day 1: Kansas City/Leavenworth/Atchison Tour

July 25, 2007

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (Overland Park)

- *Around 40-50 attendees representing businesses*
- Mixed feelings about incremental versus comprehensive reform; Kansas more adept to incremental steps, but comprehensive might bring about the most significant improvements.
- Support for using Health Information Technology to foster public reporting and transparency; it will improve quality, actively engage consumers, and drive down costs.
- Support for employee wellness programs, but recognize limitations and barriers for small businesses.
- Health reform should focus on most at-risk populations.

Silver City Health Clinic (Kansas City)

- *Around 5-7 attendees; uninsured patients and clinic staff*
- Many employers do not offer health benefits, which dissuades individuals from seeking care. Private and individual markets are too expensive.
- Medical bills too burdensome; minimum wage workers unable to afford health insurance.
- Health insurance needs to be affordable to everyone. Include all health care costs when determining what is affordable (e.g., premiums, deductibles, prescriptions, etc.)
- Need more promotion for existing programs and facilities that help the uninsured. Current safety net system is inadequate; not enough doctors and volunteers, which makes for long wait times.

Cushing Hospital (Leavenworth)

- *Around 20-30 attendees; health care providers and administrators*
- Success of health reform dependent on access to providers, including equipment and facilities needed to provide care.
- Need more education and advertisements for where people can get free or reduced cost health care.
- Promote preventive care, especially in adults and individuals with chronic conditions in order to reduce expensive emergency care.

United Methodist Church (Atchison)

- *Around 5-10 attendees from this congregation.*
- Mixed feelings about the state's role in health reform.

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Medicaid and HealthWave:

Phone: 785-296-3981

Fax: 785-296-4813

State Employee Health

Benefits and Plan Purchasing:

Phone: 785-296-6280

Fax: 785-368-7180

State Self Insurance Fund:

Phone: 785-296-2364

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- Increasing competition and making prices transparent will reduce health care costs. Standardize paperwork in order to reduce administration expenses.
- More flexibility needed in program and benefit design.
- Need for better public education on navigating the health care system.
- Integrate prevention and wellness programs into schools and promote personal responsibility.
- Provide more affordable coverage for young adults.
- Do not support employer mandates due to potential adverse effects on small businesses and part-time jobs.

Day 2: Wichita Tour

July 26, 2007

Center for Health and Wellness

- *Around 30-40 attendees representing consumers*
- Redesign systems to incorporate prevention: reimburse doctors for providing preventive services; create walking/bike paths; implement worksite wellness programs, etc.
- Chronic illnesses are a major concern; need more funding and advertisements for new and existing programs. Create incentives for people to seek care.
- Need for more public health education (nutrition and exercise); target children and adults via schools and worksites.
- Small businesses need most assistance in accessing affordable coverage.
- Do not support increased taxes.

KU School of Medicine (Wichita Campus)

- *Around 15 attendees representing faculty*
- Need for more incentives to get medical students into primary care professions, especially in rural areas.
- Pay doctors for providing preventive services; limit the amount of out-of-pocket costs for prevention services. Shifting system to prevention will take a long time to see results; focus on obesity and tobacco.
- Need for mental health reform.
- Need better reimbursements (Medicare and Medicaid) to increase access to providers.

Kansas Association of Health Underwriters

- *Around 25 attendees representing association members*
- Lower cost of high risk pool in order to get more participation.
- Need less restrictions/mandates for insurance; they are stifling competition.
- Need more advertisements for the small business insurance tax credit.
- Health care system in Kansas is NOT broken; use existing models and instead focus on lowering costs (e.g., Wal-Mart model for lowering prescription drug costs).
- Promote personal responsibility and prevention with incentives (e.g., worksite wellness programs).
- Safety-net system is a perverse incentive to remain uninsured.

Central Christian Church

- *Around 10 attendees from this congregation*
- Focus on substance abuse patients; lower cost of prescriptions, improve employer support for utilizing substance abuse services; make insurance more affordable.

- Start prevention efforts at an early age; offer incentives for healthy behaviors.
- Promote “patient-centered” care to increase patient-provider interactions
- Need for better integrated care so that all of the patient’s doctors are communicating.

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Day 3: Wellington/Winfield/El Dorado Tour

July 27, 2007

Wellington Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 20 attendees representing businesses*
- Educate children (schools) on nutrition and exercise in order to prevent diseases.
- Support for a smoking ban.
- Too difficult for small businesses to find affordable coverage; use Chambers of Commerce as a vehicle for group insurance. Create larger pools through the state; offer tax credits.
- Focus on long-term care reform; it’s too expensive.
- Educate parents on navigating the health system and prevention.

Sumner Regional Medical Hospital

- *Around 15 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Additional requirements for data reporting too burdensome on small hospitals.
- Pay more to primary care providers and rural doctors; pay for prevention. Use pharmacists to practice disease management with their patients.
- Medical bills unaffordable, which means more uncompensated care.
- Concerned with access to mental health services.
- Use carrots and sticks to promote wellness (e.g., tax tobacco, lower premiums for healthy behaviors). Start prevention with children; strengthen system by more outreach and prevention programs.

Vision 20/20 (Winfield)

- *Around 20 attendees representing this Cowley County development organization*
- Lack of physical and nutritional education in schools. Target youth for prevention efforts.
- Redesign system so that it pays for prevention rather than sickness. Reward healthy behaviors (e.g., worksite wellness programs).
- Health insurance too expensive, especially for rural Kansans; these costs prevent timely access.
- Group insurance requirements too strict in Kansas and prevents businesses from entering the market.
- Lower health care costs by capping medical malpractice lawsuits and standardizing paperwork.
- Rural areas do not have a lot of competition; free market seems to be failing them. Don’t support socialized medicine. Support for banning pharmaceutical advertisements.

William Newton Memorial Hospital (Winfield)

- *Around 10 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Want less government involvement in health care.
- Redirect money to pay for health (prevention and wellness) instead of health care. Offer incentives for healthy behaviors; target children.
- Promote personal responsibility.
- Pay more to primary care doctors; currently there is more incentive to go into a specialty field. Improve Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements to doctors. Get rid of specialty hospitals.
- Everyone should pay into the system, but it needs to account for ability to pay.

El Dorado Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 5 attendees representing businesses*
- Increase pool sizes by allowing small businesses to group together.
- Target children and young adults for prevention education.
- Current safety-net system is an incentive to be uninsured; underinsured patients pay into the system, but avoid care due to high out-of-pocket costs whereas uninsured receive free care.
- Everyone should contribute to the system; mandate health insurance or implement a sales tax.
- Do NOT want socialized medicine; partnership between public and private insurance.
- Individuals with preexisting conditions are unable to find affordable health insurance.

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Day 4: Ft. Scott/Pittsburg/Parsons Tour

August 2, 2007

Ft. Scott Chamber of Commerce

- *Around 30 attendees representing businesses*
- Reduce costs by standardizing paperwork and more transparency to drive competition.
- Mandate individual insurance to get the young and healthy into pools to help subsidize the sicker patients. Mandate all children have coverage; mandate employers to provide coverage, but keep in mind small businesses and their ability to pay.
- Promote prevention; insurers should cover these services, schools should implement nutrition and physical activity programs; educate parents to reinforce healthy behaviors.
- Tax tobacco; may support a sales tax to fund coverage for the uninsured.

Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas (Pittsburg)

- *Around 20 attendees representing consumers*
- Small businesses, low-wage workers, and college-age youth unable to find affordable coverage. Offer subsidies to these populations.
- Increase provider reimbursements for Medicaid and Medicare. Lack of access due to limited facilities and providers.
- Do not support individual mandates.
- Tax tobacco, but not sales. Tax unhealthy foods, but don't tax healthy foods as incentives for individuals to eat healthier.
- Reduce costs for medications.
- Focus prevention efforts on schools; get rid of vending machines, provide healthier lunches, reinstate physical education classes.
- Cap medical malpractice suits.

Labette County Medical Center (Parsons)

- *Around 20 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Health care is unaffordable; family coverage too expensive.
- Increase funding for mental health; focus on rehabilitation for drug abuse rather than incarceration.
- Use carrots & sticks to promote healthy living; tax tobacco, implement worksite wellness programs. Promote personal responsibility.
- State should create a pool.
- No employer mandates, especially for small businesses. No individual mandates.
- State needs to take advantage of federal dollars and maintain more state money instead of it going to the federal government.
- Control medical lawsuits in order to control costs.

Parsons Chamber of Commerce

- *About 5 attendees representing businesses*
 - Concerned with rising health care costs for premiums, deductibles, and pharmacy.
 - Lack of access to dental care for Medicaid/Medicare beneficiaries.
 - More personal responsibility for health behaviors; reward people for healthy living instead of penalizing them for bad behaviors. Promote worksite clinics; target children and schools.
 - No individual mandates due to high rates of poverty in Parsons.
 - Give tax credits to businesses for health coverage and wellness programs.
 - Tax tobacco.
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Day 5: Goodland/Norton/Hays Tour

August 3, 2007

Goodland Chamber of Commerce

- *About 6 attendees representing businesses*
- Shortage of specialty, dental, and mental health providers (improve reimbursements); telemedicine critical.
- Do not support socialized system; prefer more competition as a mechanism for improving quality of care.
- Allow small businesses to enter into the state's health insurance pool.
- Employer premiums too expensive; prefer to drop employer-sponsored care and increase wages.
- Use prevention for mental health care.

Norton County Hospital

- *About 15 attendees representing providers and administrators*
- Need incentives to recruit doctors into rural areas before people can have medical homes.
- Better reimbursement for Medicare and Medicaid.
- Concerns with LabOne and DSH.
- Educate elderly about health insurance; educate and advertise on prevention efforts.
- Concerns about government involvement in health care; usually leads to job loss in rural Kansas.

Norton Christian Church

- *About 20 attendees from this congregation*
- Concerns about government involvement in health care.
- Concerns about effects of taxing tobacco.
- Focus prevention efforts on children; insurance policies should cover preventive services.
- Family coverage too expensive.
- Believe HSAs and tort reform might lower health care costs.

Kansas Farm Bureau – Ellis County Members (Hays)

- *About 12 attendees representing farmers*
- Access to care and cost of insurance is a priority for the Farm Bureau; current system is NOT working for Kansas farmers. Health care is unaffordable, few employees offering coverage, and limited choice in providers.
- Rural communities need to have options for creating large pools for group coverage.
- Support more competition by creating incentives.

- Support prevention efforts; create wellness programs, disease management, and educate children on prevention.
 - Base assistance eligibility on net income rather than gross income.
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